

*Planning Together to Improve Outcomes for All Students*

Collaborative Federal Programs Meeting  
July 2014

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**Beyond a "Nice to Have": Social Emotional Learning and School Improvement Efforts**

Linda Dusenbury, Senior Research Consultant CASEL	Beth Hanselman, Assistant Superintendent, Center for Specialized Instruction, Nutrition and Wellness, ISBE	Mike Lamb, Director of District Engagement, Turnaround for Children
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**Session Agenda**

- Level Setting—Lightening Round on strongest case and biggest barriers for SEL (5 mins)
- Collaborative Discussion (split into three groups for round robin with experts)
  - The SEA as a Holistic Approach to SEL (20 mins each)
  - Features of High Quality SEL Standards
  - Continuous School Improvement in Context of Poverty, Stress, and Trauma
- Key Takeaways, Questions to Take Home in Large Group

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**Level Setting--Lightening Round!**

- The Case for SEL and Major Barriers
  - Impact of Standards (Linda)
  - At the SEA Level (Beth)
  - In the Context of Poverty, Stress, and Trauma (Mike)

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**Plan for the Collaborative Discussion**

- Split up into three groups
- Each group will spend 20 minutes with each expert
- Collaboration and Questions are the Key!
  - The SEA as a Holistic Approach to SEL (Beth)
  - Features of High Quality SEL Standards (Linda)
  - Continuous School Improvement in Context of Poverty, Stress, and Trauma (Mike)

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**Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**  
Features of High Quality SEL Standards  
Linda Dusenbury, Senior Research Consultant to CASEL

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### Questions

- What is “social and emotional learning” and why is SEL important?
- What are best practices in SEL?
- What are the key elements of high quality standards for SEL?
- What are the barriers to SEL and how can standards help?
- What is the status of SEL standards across the country?
- What is the status and what are barriers to SEL standards in your state/district and how can they be addressed?

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### What is “social and emotional learning” and why is SEL important?



The diagram illustrates the Social & Emotional Learning Core Competencies, centered around 'Social & Emotional Learning'. It is divided into four quadrants: 
 

- SELF-MANAGEMENT** (top-left, red): Includes skills like self-awareness, self-regulation, and goal setting.
- SELF-AWARENESS** (top-right, orange): Includes skills like self-awareness, self-regulation, and goal setting.
- SOCIAL AWARENESS** (bottom-left, blue): Includes skills like social awareness, social skills, and relationship skills.
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS** (bottom-left, blue): Includes skills like social awareness, social skills, and relationship skills.
- RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING** (bottom-right, green): Includes skills like responsible decision-making, self-management, and social awareness.

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### What are best practices in SEL?

- What conditions, relationships, and positive learning environments have been found in research to support social and emotional development?
- What types of instruction have been found in research to promote social and emotional learning?

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What are the key elements of high quality standards for SEL?

- Free-standing, comprehensive standards with developmental benchmarks across grade level and SEL domains that provide simple, clear, concise, consistent statements grounded in research.
- Integrated with standards in other subject areas
- Guidance on how adults can support students through teaching practices
- Guidance on how to create a positive learning environment and school climate
- Guidelines on how to make instruction culturally and linguistically sensitive and relevant
- Tools to support high quality implementation, including evidence-based programs, assessment, and professional development

Please see handout for examples in states.

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What are the barriers to SEL and how can standards help?

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What is the status of SEL standards across the country at the preschool level?

- Almost all states now have preschool standards documents that contain a set of free-standing standards for SEL.
- Nearly all state preschool standards documents provide **student indicators**.
- There is wide variability in the number of standards and benchmarks each state provides for SEL (from less than 10 to more than 500, for benchmarks).
- Close to 90% of state preschool standards documents:
  - provide **guidelines for caregivers** on how to support child development.
  - provide **guidelines for creating a positive environment**.
- Approximately 80% of state preschool standards documents:
  - provide guidelines on how to make instruction and programming **culturally sensitive**.
  - provide guidelines on how to make instruction and programming **linguistically appropriate**.

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What is the status of SEL standards across the country at the K-12 level?



There have been 4 approaches at the K-12 level:

- A total of 3 states have comprehensive, free-standing K-12 standards for SEL with developmental benchmarks
- Several additional states have comprehensive, free-standing standards for SEL, pre-school through early elementary
- At least 4 states have focused, free-standing standards on one or more dimensions of SEL.
- Virtually all states have SEL standards integrated into other sets of learning standards in some subject areas (at least to some minimal degree), but the quality of this approach is HIGHLY variable

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What is the status and what are the barriers to SEL standards in your state, and how might they be addressed?



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CASEL Resources to Support Standards



<http://www.casel.org/state-standards-for-social-and-emotional-learning>

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Questions?



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Contact Information

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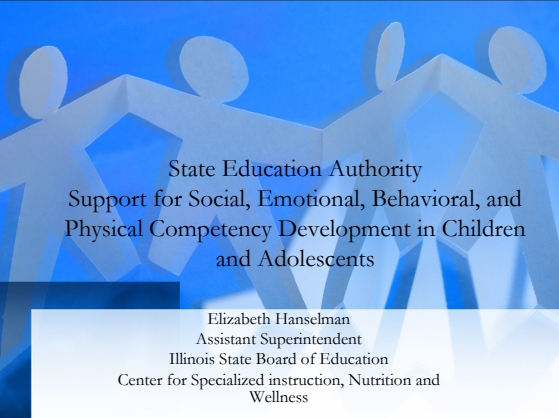
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State Education Authority  
Support for Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and  
Physical Competency Development in Children  
and Adolescents

Elizabeth Hanselman  
Assistant Superintendent  
Illinois State Board of Education  
Center for Specialized instruction, Nutrition and  
Wellness

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Question

What are specific ways a State Education Authority (SEA) can support Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in building students' social and emotional skills?

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Illinois SEA Perspective

- Focus on **whole child**
- For school improvement, implement a Multi-tiered System of Support (**MTSS**) encompassing **evidence-based practices** for:
  - **Promotion of wellness**
  - **Prevention**
  - **Early Intervention**
  - **Intensive Individualized Intervention**

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Illinois SEA Perspective cont.

- SEA **partnerships** with other State Agency stakeholders
- School **partnerships** with family and community stakeholders
- **Policy, Policy, Policy!!!**
- **Funding, Funding, Funding!!!**
- **Professional Development** on Practices & Procedures
- Allow for consideration of local **context**
- Acknowledge **change takes time and commitment**

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**Focus on the Whole Child**

- Social, emotional, behavioral, and physical child development is interrelated.
- Environment affects competency development.
- All competencies are necessary for positive student educational outcomes.
- Supports cannot be marginalized due to lack of funding, staff, etc.
- One is not more important than another and vice versa!

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**School Improvement & MTSS cont.**

- Support **ALL** students
- All students are **General Education** students first
- Practices implemented for student with disabilities can support **ALL** students.
- Inverse **is not** true!
- **Nutrition** supports healthy brain & body development.
- Safe & supportive environment improves **student outcomes**

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**SEA & State Agency Partnerships**

- State vision for a **System of Care (SOC)** for Children & Adolescents
- Outline across systems a **Continuum of Services and Supports** leveled by **intensity and duration**
- Identify **resources**
- **Reduce** redundancies
- Develop **Policy** to support local efforts

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LEAs and Family/Community Partnerships 

- When families , schools and communities partner in **promoting learning and healthy development for all children:**
  - Schools thrive and
  - Student outcomes increase!
- Research indicates that when parents are **engaged** with their children’s education:
  - Students do better academically!

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Policy 

- Provides Vision
- Provides Direction
- Provides Boundaries
- Provides Accountability
- Precedes Practices and Procedures
- Precedes Funding

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Funding 

- Policy drives funding which supports implementation
- Identify current funding for similar initiatives
- Integrate and align
- Again reduces redundancies
- More efficient and effective with fiscal resources

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**Professional Development**

- Workforce development
  - Knowledge, skills and attitudes
  - Social, emotional, behavioral and physical child development
  - Protective factors
  - Risk factors
  - Impact on educational outcomes

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**Context & Time**

- Within a systems' change model
  - Plan is based upon context
  - Takes time for change to occur
  - Having all the above listed pieces will set stage for change to occur
  - Plan from the beginning for sustainability
  - Start with evaluation plan
    - Positive outcomes = positive influence

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**Illinois Successes/Barriers**

- Successes:
  - Items listed
  - Accomplished quite a bit at the SEA level in a short period of time
- Possible Barriers:
  - Fiscal environment
  - Political environment
  - Local decision-making authority

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Closure

- Illinois State Board Website:  
- [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net)
- Comprehensive System of Learning Supports Webpage:  
- [www.isbe.net/learningsupports](http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports)
- A-Z Topic: Social emotional learning:  
- <http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/html/sel.htm>
- Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Collaborative (ISTAC):  
- <http://www.istac.net/>

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**Continuous School Improvement in the Context of Poverty, Stress, and Trauma**

**Mike Lamb**  
Director of District Engagement  
Turnaround for Children

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No Excuses vs. Fix Poverty - A False Choice 

- Failing to address the impact of poverty in school improvement efforts can lead to short-term successes, but long term struggles
- On the other hand, failing to hold students to the highest standards of rigor can perpetuate the damage many students carry with them
- The best school improvement stories focus on both academics and culture/climate/environment

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How does Poverty, Stress, and Trauma Impact School Improvement? 

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) stemming from poverty can greatly impact behavior and learning outcomes
- Students who have 4 or more lifetime ACES are dramatically more likely to have behavioral and learning challenges than students with n ACES—51% to 3%
- ACES typically result in ~10% of students being *negatively* charismatic enough to disrupt classrooms
- In high-poverty settings, like NYC, the % of students at risk for high numbers of ACES can be up to 65%

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How does Poverty, Stress, and Trauma Impact School Improvement? 

- While these challenges reveal themselves in many ways in schools, but most are *predictable and recurring*:
  - Highly stressed students w/o self-regulation and readiness skills to be successful in school
  - Staff that were not given the training and thus do not have the capacity to create successful learning environments
  - Large skill gaps of 2+ years
  - Schools that are chronically reactive to challenges instead of creating systems and practices that meet students and staff where they are

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### What can schools do?

- Create effective student support teams that identify high need students, track progress of interventions, and integrate strategies into instruction
- Create effective partnerships with community and mental health providers that are integrated into student support team
- Prioritize PD on teachers' biggest pain points—defusing disruptive behavior, student engagement, and brain science behind S/T
- Align proactive school-wide behavior management plans to create consistent student experiences across classrooms
- Collect and use data in dramatically different ways—if you're just looking at attendance, suspensions, and referrals, the problems have already happened!

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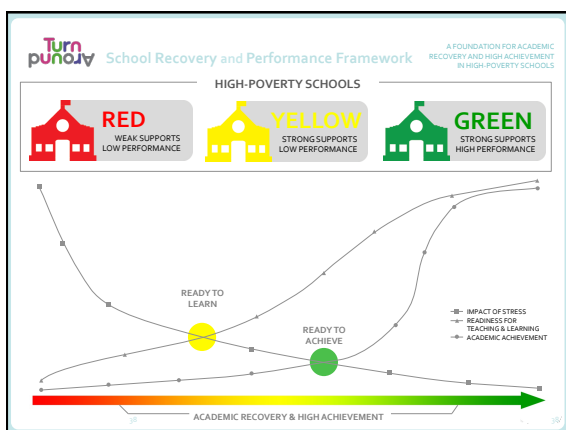
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### What can YOU do?

- Rethink accountability and data systems to track earliest stages of school improvement
- Get multiple with multiple measures! (ED really supports more than achievement—I promise!)
- Encourage struggling schools to use formula and competitive grants to prioritize learning environments and assess effectiveness with a “quantitative mindset”
- Prioritize brain science PD for staff and leaders of struggling schools

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Essential Discussion Questions 

1. How has your state tried to mitigate the impact of stress and trauma in struggling schools?
2. What are the biggest barriers that you would like input from colleagues for your state?

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